DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 452 897 JC 010 341

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TITLE	Curriculum for Entrepreneurship Education: A Review. CELCEE Digest.
INSTITUTION	Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Entrepreneurship Education, Los Angeles, CA.
SPONS AGENCY	Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Kansas City, MO. Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership.
REPORT NO	CELCEE-00-8
PUB DATE	2000-12-00
NOTE	10p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Business Administration; *Business Education; *Curriculum Design; *Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; *Entrepreneurship; Higher Education

ABSTRACT

This digest discusses curricula for entrepreneurship education in K-12 and higher education and reviews a sampling of courses at each level. In the entrepreneurship curriculum, texts are aimed at giving only the necessary information, and worksheets are used to help students focus on how they would develop their own businesses. Students gain hands-on experience in creating a business in either a simulated environment or in the real marketplace. In elementary and middle schools, entrepreneurship is often integrated into curricula as a social studies unit; in high school, a business education unit. This digest lists several programs for the K-12 environment, including The New Youth Entrepreneur, PACE (Program for Acquiring Competence in Entrepreneurship), and Own the Place. It also discusses curricula and specific programs for at-risk youth. In the higher education environment, university professors and community college instructors have developed a variety of curricula for entrepreneurship, covering such topics as: concept of entrepreneurship, the characteristics of entrepreneurs, the value of entrepreneurship, building a business, developing an idea, and managing a business. Textbook sources for the college classroom are also presented. (JA)

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CELCEE Digest 00-8

Curriculum for Entrepreneurship Education: A Review

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December, 2000

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Curriculum for Entrepreneurship Education: A Review

By Carolyn Brown

Are entrepreneurs born or are they taught? Educational institutions seem to have an answer to this old question: entrepreneurs can be taught. Universities, community colleges, high schools, elementary schools, and out-of-school programs for at-risk youth are teaching entrepreneurship. An increasing interest in entrepreneurship education has resulted in a proliferation of curriculum for entrepreneurship education. This digest introduces some of the curriculum in K-12 and higher education and reviews a sampling of curriculum at each level.

Curriculum for K-12 Students

Curriculum on entrepreneurship, whether for use in or out of a formal classroom, begins by defining the concept of entrepreneurship and developing a framework into which young people can adopt the value of being entrepreneurial. Goals are to teach students the skills to build a business, and in a larger sense, to take responsibility and initiative in their lives. Texts are aimed at giving only the necessary information, and worksheets are used to help students focus on how they will develop their own businesses. Students gain hands-on experience in creating a business, sometimes in a simulated environment and sometimes in the real marketplace.

Marilyn Kourilsky, Vice President of the Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, has lead the way since the 1980's in curriculum development in entrepreneurship education for K-12 classes. She is arguably the preeminent developer of curriculum in this area and has pioneered the expansion of entrepreneurship into a recognized field of study. Her

curriculum focuses on the concept of entrepreneurship and teaches general behaviors for working and living successfully, as well as skills in starting businesses. Steve Mariotti, Director the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship, has created curriculum and programs for teaching entrepreneurship to inner-city at-risk youth outside of the formal classroom. His curriculum has lead the way in providing entrepreneurial education programs for out-of-school environments.

Curriculum for the K-12 Classroom

Curriculum for K-12 classrooms includes programs that have been developed for elementary, middle and high school students. In elementary and middle schools, entrepreneurship is often integrated into curriculum as a unit for in social studies. At the high school level, entrepreneurship is frequently taught as a unit within business education courses. Entrepreneurial education is appropriate at any point in the academic program when the teaching of skills for work and living is desired.

The New Youth Entrepreneur, by Marilyn Kourilsky, Carol Allen, Aaron Bocage, George Waters and Gary Rabbior. Available from EDTEC, 313 Market St, Camden, NJ 08102. This program is a series of 12 modules that teach entrepreneurship as a concept and walk the students through the steps of starting a business. Each module contains text and worksheets that address concepts in entrepreneurship education as well as the basic skills needed to start a business. The curriculum is aimed at upper elementary and middle school student. This program, published by Education Training and Enterprise Center (EDTEC) has been updated and expanded for 2000 and is available on compact disc.

YESS!/Mini-Society, by Marilyn Kourilsky and Sheila Carson. Available from The Center for Entrepreneurial Research, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 4900 Oak Street,

Kansas City, MO 64112. This series, published in 1996, is directed toward elementary school children. The course is a simulation design that takes children through the steps of developing a market-driven society, including development of currency, selection of a governmental system, start up and management of a business. Materials include five paperback textbooks that are complete with teachable text, course guidelines and objectives, and black line master worksheets to accompany the simulations.

PACE (Program for Acquiring Competence in Entrepreneurship). Available from the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, 1601 W. Fifth Ave., PMB 199, Columbus, OH 43212 or online at *http://www.entre-ed.org/curricul.htm*. This competency-based curriculum comprises 21 topical booklets. The booklets include objectives for each competency topic, with text and worksheets that can be mixed and matched to suit individual program needs and age levels. Level 1 is designed to introduce the field of business development for younger students. Level 2 takes older students through the process of developing a business plan, and Level 3 is for adults who are ready to start a business. PACE, originally developed in 1994, is available for 2000 on compact disc for both PC and MAC computers.

Open for Business: A Project Based Entrepreneurship and Job Skills Program. Available from Global Education Partnership, 310 8th St., Suite 303, Oakland, CA 94607. This program, published in 1999 and designed for middle and high school students, addresses skills in entrepreneurship and job readiness. The first unit encourages and supports students in carrying out real world entrepreneurial projects. The second unit teaches job search and interview skills and stresses leadership and responsibility.

Own the Place, Available from Start-Up Education, P.O. Box 7072, Pueblo West, CO 81007 or online at *http://way.opens.org/owntheplace/index.htm*. Own the Place teaches career

skills and helps students experience business first-hand. The curriculum is designed for middle school or high school students, school-to-work or community programs and summer camps. Students develop a business plan for a new business. The teachers' manual includes 15 detailed units with objectives, lesson plans, materials, and exercises.

Curriculum for At-Risk Youth

Dozens of community organizations around the U.S. and Canada provide entrepreneurship courses for young people who are at risk of leaving school or encountering other social problems. These programs, which are discussed at length in *Resources for Youth Entrepreneurs* by Brown (1999), teach young people functional life and work place skills.

Entrepreneurship: How to Start and Operate a Small Business, by Steve Mariotti. Available from the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship, 120 Wall St., 29th Floor, New York, NY 10005 or on line at *http://www.nfte.com*. The Mariotti program is a complete package including instructions, guest speakers, materials, and field trips. The content of the curriculum includes an overview of entrepreneurship, basic skills for starting and operating a small business, and general workplace responsibilitus. The program is aimed at middle and high school students.

Growing a Business, KidsWay, 5589 Peachtree Road, Atlanta, GA 30341 or online at *http://www.youngbiz.com*. Kidsway, Inc, founded in 1994, uses entrepreneurship and business education to help at-risk students develop the skills needed to succeed in school as well as enhance their emotional and personal growth. The program provides teacher training, consultations, and workshops, as well as curriculum publications that can be used in and out of the classroom. The curriculum teaches the fundamentals of employment skills and how to start and run a business.

Curriculum in Higher Education

Throughout the United States there are hundreds of entrepreneurship programs in higher education. These programs come in various forms, from full majors within schools of business to extensions programs operated by community colleges. A summary of graduate programs in entrepreneurship is available in the CELCEE Digest 99-2 *Teaching New Dogs New Tricks: The Rise of Entrepreneurship Education in Graduate Schools of Business* by Brown (1999). Many schools of business offer entrepreneurship either as a series of courses or a concentration in undergraduate business majors.

Curriculum Structure

University professors and community college instructors have developed a variety of curricula for courses in entrepreneurship. Most examples address fundamentals of entrepreneurship similar to the K-12 curriculum. They tend to begin with a definition and conceptual explanation of entrepreneurship and move onto the fundamental skills of starting a business—generating an idea, analyzing the market, finding the capital, and management and accounting procedures for running a businesses. Specific examples and syllabi may be found through Websites of business schools and departments at two- and four-year institutions. One good site is the Babson College Arthur M. Blank Center for Entrepreneurship (*http://www.babson.edu/entrep/index.html*), which includes links for teaching and courses. Among entrepreneurial courses, the following general format is fairly standard:

- Concept of entrepreneurship
- Characteristics of an entrepreneurs
- Value of entrepreneurship
- Building a business

- Assessing opportunities, market, and self-ability
- Developing an idea
- Finding the capital
- Starting up the business
- Managing a business.

Textbooks

Higher education programs in entrepreneurship have an increasing selection of textbooks from which to choose. Katz and Green (1996) identified over four dozen texts were identified as being used by instructors in classes on entrepreneurship. An excerpt from Katz and Green (1996) that includes a list of texts can be found online at *http://www.slu.edu/eweb/texts.htm*. A list of texts currently in print is available through St. Louis University at *http://www.slu.edu/eweb/texts.htm*. These texts tend to fall into several categories:

- Case books which provide lengthy examples of successful enterprises;
- Conventional texts that offer a variety of topics with definitions, examples and applications;
- Texts which focus on developing a business plan;
- Industry specific texts that look at developing a small business within a specific industry.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education is a common course of study in both K-12 and higher education settings. A wide variety of curricular approaches exist, though many common elements are found across institutions and settings. These texts and programs are generally structured to introduce the concept of entrepreneurship and provide hands-on experience and working models for students to develop skills as workers and entrepreneurs. The principles of

entrepreneurship are increasingly considered valuable for students at all levels. As Kourilsky (1996, p.2) summarized: "In response to the rapidly changing national landscape, not only of employment but more generally of economic growth and job creation, entrepreneurship is being increasingly emphasized as a critical resource."

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* Numbers in parentheses are CELCEE document numbers. CELCEE, the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Clearinghouse on Entrepreneurship Education, is an adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse funded by the Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership. Abstracts for these documents can be accessed through CELCEE at *http://www.celcee.edu*.